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ABSTRACT

A Senate committe hearing received testimony on the proposed "Native American Commercial Driving Training and Technical Assistance Act" (Senate Bill 1344). The Act cites the high unemployment and economic distress among Native Americans, the federal government's obligation to assist Indian tribes with economic development, the high demand and expected increase in demand for commercial truck drivers, and the benefits of a career in commercial vehicle driving. Four grants to provide commercial driver training and certification would be awarded competitively, with the competition restricted to tribally controlled community colleges or universities. Two of these--Fort Peck Community College (Montana) and D-Q University (California)--currently offer commercial vehicle driving programs. Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and speakers representing the American Trucking Association, an American Indian-owned trucking firm, and Fort Peck Community College offered comments and recommendations related to the Act's passage and implementation, and discussed the role of tribally controlled colleges and universities in Native American job training and economic development; the funding needs of tribally controlled colleges; descriptions of current commercial driving programs and certification requirements; and career benefits. (SV)

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ED 475 064

S. HRG. 107–623

NATIVE AMERICAN COMMERCIAL DRIVING TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACT

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS
UNITED STATES SENATE

ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

ON

S. 1344

TO PROVIDE TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO NATIVE AMERICANS WHO ARE INTERESTED IN COMMERCIAL VEHICLE DRIVING CAREERS

JULY 24, 2002
WASHINGTON, DC

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NATIVE AMERICAN COMMERCIAL DRIVING TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE ACT

WEDNESDAY, JULY 24, 2002

U.S. SENATE,
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:02 a.m. in room 485, Senate Russell Building, Hon. Ben Nighthorse Campbell (vice chairman of the committee) presiding.

Present: Senator Campbell.

STATEMENT OF HON. BEN NIGHTHORSE CAMPBELL, U.S. SENATOR FROM COLORADO, VICE CHAIRMAN, COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

Senator CAMPBELL. Good morning and welcome to the hearing on S. 1344, the Native American Commercial Driving Training and Technical Assistance Act, which I introduced on August 2, 2001.

In 1999, the Bureau of Indian Affairs labor statistics for Indian and Alaska Native communities determined that the unemployment rate for Indians living near or in Indian communities was 43 percent.

This figure is all the more astonishing when compared to the 5.6 percent overall jobless rate across the Nation. You might say, if you go to some reservations, in fact, the unemployment is up around 70 percent, as many people that attend our hearings know.

Like many in Indian Country, I believe that ultimately, economic development is the key to curing many of the ills in our communities; and the trucking industry is a thriving industry providing economic opportunties..

Based on my own personal experience, having been a driver myself, and watching very carefully the driving industry, I know it offers well-paying jobs to people that are interested in driving; and I certainly think that there is a connection we can make with Indian communities. It is a win/win situation. The trucking industry needs more qualified drivers and Indian communities need jobs.

According to the Department of Transportation, there are currently about three million truck drivers in the United States. However, the American Trucking Association estimates that between 10 and 20 percent of the Nation's trucks sit idle, due to the lack of qualified drivers.

In fact, estimates range from 200,000 to 500,000, as to the shortage of new qualified drivers that are needed this year and in the

coming years. In fact, there has been some discussion about importing drivers from foreign countries, to try and meet that demand.

While S. 1344 is a rather modest bill, I believe it is important, because it tailors job training to market demands; something that is not always done with Federal job training initiatives.

This bill would encourage Indian tribally-controlled colleges to offer commercial vehicle training programs. This bill recognizes that tribal colleges and universities provide much of the education and vocational training that takes place in Indian communities.

On July 3 of this year, President Bush issued Executive Order 13270, in which he stated:

> Tribal colleges provide crucial services in communities that continue to suffer high rates of unemployment and the resulting social and economic distress.

I would say that I note with interest that I think it is very important to the President to increase opportunities for jobs, among all people, and Indian people, in particular.

We did invite the Department of Labor to send someone to this hearing on three separate occasions, and they have declined. So apparently, so far, they have been talking a good game, but are not that interested in trying to help with jobs in Indian communities.

Two tribally-controlled community colleges, D–Q University, which is in the valley near Sacramento, California, and the Fort Peck Community College in the State of Montana, both offer commercial driving training programs. The grant program authorized in this bill will hopefully encourage other tribal colleges to develop commercial truck driving training programs, as well.

[Text of S. 1344 follows:]

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II

107TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 1344

To provide training and technical assistance to Native Americans who are interested in commercial vehicle driving careers.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

AUGUST 2, 2001

Mr. CAMPBELL introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Indian Affairs

---

A BILL

To provide training and technical assistance to Native Americans who are interested in commercial vehicle driving careers.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Native American Commercial Driving Training and Technical Assistance Act".

SEC. 2. FINDINGS AND PURPOSES.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress makes the following findings:

(1) Despite the availability of abundant natural resources on Indian lands and a rich cultural legacy

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that accords great value to self-determination, self-reliance, and independence, Native Americans suffer higher rates of unemployment, poverty, poor health, substandard housing, and associated social ills than those of any other group in the United States.

(2) The United States has an obligation to assist Indian tribes with the creation of appropriate economic and political conditions.

(3) The economic success and material well-being of Native American communities depends on the combined efforts of the Federal Government, tribal governments, the private sector, and individuals.

(4) Two tribally controlled community colleges, D–Q University in the State of California and Fort Peck Community College in the State of Montana, currently offer commercial vehicle driving programs.

(5) The American Trucking Association reports that at least until the year 2005, the trucking industry will need to hire 403,000 truck drivers each year to fill empty positions.

(6) According to the Federal Government Occupational Handbook the commercial driving industry is expected to increase about as fast as the average for all occupations through the year 2008 as the

economy grows and the amount of freight carried by trucks increases.

(7) A career in commercial vehicle driving offers a competitive salary, employment benefits, job security, and a profession.

(b) PURPOSE.—It is the purpose of this Act—

(1) to foster and promote job creation and economic opportunities for Native Americans; and

(2) to provide education, technical, and training assistance to Native Americans who are interested in a commercial vehicle driving career.

SEC. 3. DEFINITIONS.

In this Act:

(1) COMMERCIAL VEHICLE DRIVING.—The term "commercial vehicle driving" means the driving of a vehicle which is a tractor-trailer truck.

(2) SECRETARY.—The term "Secretary" means the Secretary of Labor.

SEC. 4. COMMERCIAL VEHICLE DRIVING TRAINING PROGRAM.

(a) GRANTS.—The Secretary may award 4 grants, on a competitive basis, to eligible entities to support programs providing training and certificates leading to the professional development of individuals with respect to commercial vehicle driving.

(b) ELIGIBILITY.—To be eligible to receive a grant under subsection (a), an entity shall—

(1) be a tribally-controlled community college or university (as defined in section 2 of the Tribally-Controlled Community College or University Assistance Act of 1978 (25 U.S.C. 1801)); and

(2) prepare and submit to the Secretary an application at such time, in such manner, and containing such information as the Secretary may require.

(c) PRIORITY.—In awarding grants under subsection (a), the Secretary shall give priority to—

(1) grant applications that propose training that exceeds the United States Department of Transportation's Proposed Minimum Standards for Training Tractor-Trailer Drivers; and

(2) grant applications that propose training that exceeds the entry level truck driver certification standards set by the Professional Truck Driver Institute.

(d) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out the Act.

○

Senator CAMPBELL. We have three witnesses this morning, and the Department of Labor, as I mentioned, is not here. But we will hear from Dr. James Shanley, the president of Fort Peck Community College, Poplar, MT; David Fluke, who is a professional driver with Fed Ex West, who will be here from the American Trucking Association, of Citrus Heights, CA; and Andra Rush, the president of Rush Trucking, in Wayne, MI.

Thank you all for being here. Your complete written testimony will be included in the record. If you would like to abbreviate your testimony, please do so. We will go ahead and start with Dr. Shanley.

Dr. Shanley, please proceed.

STATEMENT OF JAMES E. SHANLEY, PRESIDENT, FORT PECK COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Mr. SHANLEY. Thank you, Senator Campbell, and distinguished members of the committee. I would like to thank you for inviting me today to testify before your committee.

My name is Jim Shanley. I am here in the capacity of being the President of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, and I am also the president of Fort Peck Community College, which is located in Northeastern Montana. It is on the Fort Peck, Assiniboine and Sioux Reservation.

In 1972, six tribally-controlled colleges established the American Indian Higher Education Consortium, to provide a support network for its member institutions. Today, AIHEC represents 32 tribal colleges and universities in 12 States, to specifically serve the higher education needs of American Indians.

As we sit here, we have four or five more tribal colleges that are in the development stages, in other places around the country.

Over the past 3 decades, tribal leaders have continued to recognize that only through local, culturally-relevant, holistic methods can many American Indian succeed in higher education.

Collectively, the tribal colleges currently serve approximately 30,000 full part-time students, from over 250 federally-recognized tribes.

A majority of our member institutions offer 2-year degrees and vocational certificates, with eight colleges offering Baccalaureate Degrees, and two that offer Master Degree programs. In addition, many of the colleges have distance education programs, through articulation agreements with major colleges and universities that offer a whole other variety of degrees.

Together, we are proud to say that we represent the most significant and successful development in American Indian education history, promoting achievement among students who would otherwise never know educational success.

Tribal colleges and universities are deeply tied to the welfare of our respective communities. Our reservations are located in remote area, and our populations are among the poorest in the Nation. On the average, median household income levels are only about one-half of the level of the U.S. population, as a whole.

Conditions on the reservation make for stagnant economies. Post-secondary educational programs at tribal colleges, including vocational education, make it possible for our students to train for and

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obtain jobs that offer stability, benefits, and a decent salary; which, in turn, reduces welfare dependency, and provides an economic boost to local communities.

Most importantly, these programs, and the resulting boost in employment, aid in providing a sense of self-sufficiency that is critical in moving the American Indian people forward.

Tribal colleges serve multiple roles in our community functioning as community centers, libraries, tribal archives, career and business center, economic development centers, and public meeting places. TCU's also serve as a practical resource for the upkeep of community property.

Programs, such as the one proposed in S. 1344, that require the acquisition of equipment that can serve dual uses, are a ready aid to tribal governments. When not in use by the college for training programs, this equipment can be utilized for reservation economic development projects, such as construction of student and community housing, paving of local roads, and hauling food supplies and building materials.

Mr. Chairman, despite the remarkable accomplishments, tribal colleges remain the most poorly funding institutions of higher education in the country. Funding for basic institutional operations for the 24 reservation-based colleges is provided through the Tribal Controlled College and University Assistance Act of 1978. Funding under this act is authorized at $6,000 per full-time Indian student.

In fiscal year 2002, 21 years after funding for institutional operations was first appropriated, the colleges are receiving $3,916 per Indian student. So we receive less than two-thirds of the authorized level, after 21 years of support for our programs.

While mainstream institutions enjoy a stable foundation of state and local support, TCUs rely on annual appropriations from the Federal Government for their institutional operating funds.

Because we are located on Federal Trust lands, States bear no obligation to fund our colleges. In fact, most States do not even pay our colleges for the non-Indian State resident students, who account for approximately 20 percent of our enrollment.

Vocational educational programs and work force training are time-honored methods for improving the livelihoods of those who seek quality job skills in less time than it takes for a more formal course of study.

It used to be, year ago, they always said that Indians were good with their hands, when they made us go to vocational programs. We do not say that much anymore.

But I think that many of our people do really drift toward vocational programs. Because, number one, vocational programs give you skills that allow you a little more independence.

Sometimes you can start your own business. It helps to move you in that direction, and it gives you more freedom. Plus, it also gives you the ability to do outdoor work, which people like. Many people on reservations like to work outside, or to work around things that involve a variety of environments.

Our tribal colleges now offer a wide range of vocational education, specifically tailored to the needs of the students and their communities. Today, as this legislation recognizes, there is a tre-

mendous need for commercial vehicle drivers, and that need will only increase.

This legislation would enable tribal colleges and universities to expand even further the range of employment possibilities available to American Indian students, and provide them with entry into this rapidly expanding and lucrative job market.

One of the reasons that there are only a few tribal colleges that offer programs in commercial vehicle operation right now is that the starting costs are prohibitive. The per-student cost estimates do not take into account the enormous expense of equipment acquisition and maintenance.

A brand new tractor-trailer of the type frequently seen on our Nation's highway could cost up to $150,000. Even to buy a used vehicle, oftentimes, to get a good working used vehicle, you know, you are talking anywhere from $15,000 to $50,000. So even used vehicles are difficult to obtain for trial colleges that do not have very much money to spend per student.

In addition to the cost of the equipment and the equipment acquisition, insurance is a huge expense. Then you have repair and maintenance of the vehicle, fuel, and the other operating costs, as well as the costs of instruction. You have to have qualified people.

If there is a shortage of drivers crossing the road, you can imagine how difficult it is to find qualified truck drivers, who are willing to forego the money they could make, as a commercial truck driver, and teach the craft.

In Montana, we have two commercial truck driving operations. One is at Salish Kootenai College, on the Flathead Reservation in Western Montana; and the other one is at Fort Peck, where I am at.

At Salish Kootenai, Joe McDonnell estimates that they spend $300,000, annually, to maintain their highway construction worker program, is what it is called. It costs approximately $12,500 per student. This does not include the equipment acquisition costs.

At Fort Peck Community College, our costs are probably somewhat similar. At our college, we do not receive State aid, or we receive a very minimal amount of State aid. Of course, our students receive Pell Grants, and that kind of thing, but that barely offsets the costs of tuition for our institutions.

The way that Joe has been able to piece his program together is through different Federal grants. He has been able to get some equipment through the GSA Surplus Program, and then he has some support, I think, off and on, from the Department of Labor and some from the Department of the Interior. Other construction projects that have taken place on the reservation have helped to fund and fuel that trucking program at Salish.

At Fort Peck, we are very similar. We started out and we bought a used truck for $4,500. It created a lot of problems, because it did no have power steering. So it was difficult for us to teach women, because they literally could not turn the truck. So equipment is a very costly and constant problem for us.

Of course, we find that students not only need to be instructed in the fundamentals of trucking driving or another chosen trade, but they also need basic job seeking and related skills. They really need to learn how to work.

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In many instances, there is a lot of our reservation population that just simply do not have the job skills. They have never been trained. They do not understand the requirements and the responsibilities of work. It is going to take some time to train some of those people.

At Salish, for the people that are going into truck driving, the students are required to complete a course in job seeking skills, which prepared them to find the jobs, the employment in their chosen field. But it also gives them some skills that will help them to keep the job, once they find them.

We believe that there is a comprehensive approach, that would be invaluable to bringing a truck driving program, so that it actually really produced working drivers.

The Consortium, as a whole, fully supports this measure, as providing positive assistance to our students, to realize their full potential, and offer greater benefits to the economic health of our communities.

Tribal colleges are deeply appreciative of any means in which they can increase and stabilize funding in operation and program areas.

Senator the proposed legislation does not mention specific language about the level of funding or the duration of grants; only the number of grants available. As noted earlier, vocational education programs not only have tremendous start-up costs, but they have considerable day-to-day operational expenses, as well.

One concern that we have is expending the significant costs involved with starting this type of program, and then not being able to maintain it over several years. In other words, we would reach the point where we would actually get the trucks, and then we do not have enough money to put fuel in them.

So we would hope that if this bill is passed, that there are adequate funding levels, and a long enough time period built into the program, so that colleges would be able to maintain it, over a number of years.

The awarding of 3 to 5 year grants would solve this problem by providing stable funding to get a program up and running. In addition, we suggest that the legislation not limit to four the number of grants that may be awarded by the Secretary of Labor; but instead, specify an adequate amount of funding to support that number of grants.

In other words, if it is going to cost $1.2 million a year, for 5 years; $300,000 a year, for a program, then specify $6 million. If additional funding can be secured for this program, the Secretary would not be limited to four awards.

There may be some institutions that have other resources, that may not need quite as much money to run a program, so we may be able to get five or six programs for the cost of four, as well. This would allow more colleges the chance to think about developing this kind of opportunity.

We also believe that there could be additional employment opportunities, if the proposed definition of commercial driving were expanded beyond driving of a vehicle which is tractor-trailer truck; thereby giving the tribal colleges the flexibility to train students to do other truck and heavy equipment driving.

In many areas, that type of driving, which tends to be more seasonal, is also one of the major local employment areas. For example, at Fort Peck, we are involved, right now, in planning and designing a $200 million water system, that is going to serve the whole of Northeastern Montana.

That project, if it comes to fruition, will last for 10 years, and will require a whole number of driving-related skill areas; from CAT operators to truck drivers to belly-dump haulers to water trucks, and a whole gamut of things.

In addition, highway construction is also a major area, where many of our people would be able to go to work, at least seasonally, in Montana.

There are also a few technical changes that AIHEC would like to respectfully suggest be made to S. 1344. I will ask that our AIHEC staff address these minor changes, and work with the staff of the committee, with whom they have long enjoyed a very productive working relationship. Hopefully, we can work with you to try to help make this bill more tailored to meet the needs of the trial college.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Shanley appears in appendix.]

Senator CAMPBELL. Thank you, Dr. Shanley.

I might tell you that this is a vehicle, if I can use that phrase, as all first attempts are with bills. We welcome your input and changes that need to be made.

I might tell you how I got the idea for this bill. It was in Montana. I was up visiting home, which is Lame Deer, in Central Montana, and I ran into a young Cheyenne, that I had known years and years ago. I had not seen him for a number of years, and I asked him what he was doing.

He said he was working for Dick Simon, which is a big trucking company in Billings. I asked him how he liked the job. He was an over-the-road driver, all over the States. He said, great. He did not like being home as little as he was, but he had been trying to get home at least two days out of every week, which was pretty good for some of those long line guys.

But I asked him about the pay and the opportunities, and he was thrilled at the opportunity to make between $40,000 and $50,000 a year, in a place where you have probably 60 percent or more unemployment.

That is where I really got the idea for this. There must be a lot of young Indian men and women, who do not mind the travel a bit. In fact, they like to travel. But if they could couple that with an opportunity to make a living, particularly in this new day of what is called team driving, there might be some real possibilities. That is why we framed this bill up. But we know that any bill can be improved on; that is for sure.

Let us go on with Mr. Fluke. I will ask questions after we finish with the whole panel; thank you.

STATEMENT OF DAVID FLUKE, PROFESSIONAL DRIVER, FED EX FREIGHT WEST, AMERICAN TRUCKING ASSOCIATION

Mr. FLUKE. Thank you, Senator.

Vice Chairman Campbell, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to express the trucking industry's perspectives

regarding truck driving training issues; and more specifically, Senate Bill S. 1344, the Native American Commercial Driver Training and Technical Assistance Act.

I am David Fluke, a professional truck driver for Fed Ex Freight West, based in Sacramento, CA, a distinguished member of the American Trucking Association's America's Road Team, and a proud member of the Cherokee Nation.

I have driven large trucks professionally in the U.S. for 18 years and am proud to communicate to you the fact that I have logged over 1.8 million accident-free and citation-free miles behind the wheel.

I am appearing before the committee today on behalf of the American Trucking Associations. ATA is a national trade association of the trucking industry. ATA represents an industry that employs nearly 10 million people in our great country, providing 1 out of 14 civilian jobs.

This includes the more than 3 million professional drivers, who travel over 400 billion miles per year to deliver Americans 87 percent of their transported goods.

Mr. Chairman, ATA supports S. 1344, and commends Senator Campbell for its introduction.

Looking at the industry figures I mentioned, you can readily see that the old adage, "If you got it, a truck brought it," is truer now than it has ever been. I, personally, know of one thing that trucks do not deliver.

Trucking is one of the most essential industries to the American economy. Every business and every person in this country relies on a truck to move America's goods safely and efficiently. Drivers, of course, are the key to delivering the freight on time, every time.

The keys to a thriving trucking business are literally and figuratively in the hands of the company's professional drivers. While professional driving continues to become more complex, requiring more sophisticated skills, and a higher tolerance of stress than ever before, I am pleased to report that truck drivers are delivering the goods more safely and more efficiently than ever before.

According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, the safety trends in the trucking industry are clearly headed in the right direction. DOT reports that fatal crash rates for large trucks have declined from 4.6 fatal crashes per 100 million miles traveled in 1980, to 2.2 fatal crashes per 100 million miles traveled in the year 2000. That is a 52-percent decrease.

DOT also reports that alcohol involvement for large truck drivers involved in fatal crashes has declined 73 percent, since 1982.

It is for these and other reasons that professional drivers like me are proud of our profession and the industry we work within.

Mr. Chairman, ATA and its members have been involved in driver training issues since ATA's establishment in the 1930's. The reason for this involvement is simple. Well-trained drivers are safe drivers, and safe drivers save companies money.

Well-trained drivers are also more productive. They are also good caretakers of their equipment, and they are more adept at customer relations. Company investments in training and driver development result in an improved safety performance, and a reduction in personnel problems.

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While ATA has been active in many driver training initiatives, two are of particular note. The first is the ATA support for the Professional Truck Driver Institute. PTDI has become the Nation's foremost advocate of optimum standards and professionalism for entry level truck-driver training.

PTDI also provides a forum through which the key stakeholders: insurers, training schools, and motor carriers, are able to help ensure that America's entry-level drivers have been properly trained and are competent to enter the industry.

ATA supports the mission of PTDI, and has provided both financial and technical assistance to the institute for many years.

Additionally, ATA was one of the founding members of the Driver Training and Development Alliance in 1994. Fourteen trucking-related associations agreed to form the Driver Training and Development Alliance, in order to gather, disseminate, and promote success with voluntary driver-training programs and activities.

Throughout the 1990's, the Alliance sponsored annual forums for stakeholders to discuss and advance key training issues. It created a practical guide to identify commercial drivers as higher risk for accidents and violations, and established effective counter-measures; and its members assisted in reviewing and improving PTDI's certification process for entry level driver training programs.

Through its involvement in these organizations, ATA has been a driving force, improving both entry-level and in-service driver training.

Mr. Chairman, unfortunately, the trucking industry has been plagued with chronic shortages of qualified drivers. ATA estimates that the trucking industry will need more than 80,000 new professional drivers for each year for the foreseeable future. Thus, programs and initiatives aimed at expanding the pool of potential drivers is quite welcome.

Additionally, the changing demographics of this country have clearly changed the trucking industry's recruiting practices. In its early days, trucking drew young, white males, who sought independence and wanted to use the open road to see the country.

Well, minorities are growing dramatically as a percentage of the U.S. population; and as a result, the industry is actively recruiting more drivers from minority groups, such as Hispanics and Native Americans.

Mr. Vice Chairman, ATA supports the effort of you and this committee to promote professional truck driver training programs at tribally-controlled community colleges. S. 1344 holds the potential to provide a good opportunity to many Native Americans interested in having an exciting career, while moving America's economy forward.

Professional truck driving is a career that more than 3 million Americans currently call their own. It is also a job that offers an opportunity to make a good wage; currently, more than $40,000, annually.

At the same time, this bill would provide opportunities for the Native American. It would be assisting the trucking industry by expanding the pool of qualified driver candidates, an expansion that is sorely needed. S. 1344 offers the proverbial win/win scenario.

Thank you, again, Mr. Vice Chairman and committee members, for the opportunity to offer our thoughts on professional truck-driver training issues and on S. 1344. We look forward to working with the committee in any way that we can, to put more well trained and qualified drivers on the Nation's highways.

Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Mr. Fluke appears in appendix.]

Senator CAMPBELL. Thank you.

Andra, you may go ahead.

STATEMENT OF ANDRA RUSH, PRESIDENT, RUSH TRUCKING

Ms. RUSH. Good morning. Mr. Vice Chairman, Senator Campbell, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you very much for the opportunity to address this committee on the Native American Commercial Driver Training and Technical Assistance Act, S. 1344.

My name is Andra Rush. I am president of Rush Trucking Corporation, a $150 million long-haul and expedited operation, based in Detroit, Michigan, serving the automotive industry for over 18 years, or since 1984.

I am of the Mohawk Nation's Six Nations Iroquois Reservation, Oshweegon, Ontario. As I have been in this industry for over 18 years I have seen a tremendous rise in the demand for qualified drivers within the industry.

We are faced with an ever-increasing demand of inventory velocity and transportation, via truck versus rail, has gained popularity, year after year.

The automotive industry has been a leader in minority supplier development and training, and as a result, several small businesses have emerged, creating numerous employment opportunities, and further promotion of diversity-based suppliers in North America.

As you have heard today, the driver shortage has been a critical problem in our industry since the early 1990's. The statistics demonstrate the demand for a solid driver to fill the vacancies that exist now and in the future. The fact is, there just are not enough qualified and trained drivers to support the industry demand.

Competition in our industry has pressured small businesses to focus on survival, and the limited financial resources have threatened the ability to provide the training and technical assistance necessary to private create and fund driving schools.

As this committee well knows, economic self-sufficiency, for Native people, remains an illusive goal. In spite of more than 175 years of Federal support and oversight, Native American rank last in every measurement of quality of life in the United States.

As president of Native American Business Alliance, which is an organization we formed seven years ago, in conjunction with Ford, GM, Daimler-Chrysler, Toyota, and Honda, we have grown to more than 50 Fortune 500 companies, and more than 200 Native American business owners.

I believe that America's First People can realize the American dream and reclaim their proud heritage by identifying and capitalizing on the gaps and niches in the American work force.

I am confident that the commercial vehicle driving professional career will create a work force that can rapidly be employed, and

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contribute to the solution of the drive shortage facing our industry, and allow the Native people to remain on tribal lands, and find employment that provides a living wage, solid benefits, and opportunity for advancement.

Both testimonies today from Dr. Shanley and Mr. Fluke addressed the level of funding and duration of the program, that I think needs to be a little more clear, within this bill.

It is my goal that the U.S. Senate approves and supports this legislation, and I would like to thank you very much, Senator Campbell.

[Prepared statement of Ms. Rush appears in appendix.]

Senator CAMPBELL. Thank you.

Let me ask you, and I will maybe just start with Dr. Shanley first, you mentioned the dual use of equipment. How do you prioritize who uses it, and how do you work out the maintenance, insurance, upkeep, whatever, if it is used for private companies, Indian companies, I guess, on the reservation; or is it used for tribal council-authorized programs, or what? How do you fit that in with the training that you need to do?

Mr. SHANLEY. Well, what we do right now, Senator, is the college has a limited amount of equipment, in terms of heavy equipment. We only have the one truck.

So we have a program that is called our Tribal Enterprise Program. The Tribal Enterprise Program does low level construction activities for the tribes, like building driveways. They do some snow removal, and they do things like this.

So we use some of their equipment, some of the time. Like, if they need to use our truck, we let them use our truck, if they let us use their lowboy to haul our backhoe. So we work constantly, primarily with tribal programs, to try to accomplish things that have to be done around the reservation.

Senator CAMPBELL. I see.

Mr. SHANLEY. And we have done some cooperative work with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, as well. We have done a little bit with Indian House Service, in terms of working on sewer projects and dirt digging projects; but we have not worked very much with private industry. It has been primarily tribal work.

Senator CAMPBELL. For instance, I understand truck driving is one of the things that the Veteran's Administration will pay for, the training, if you are a veteran. Has your school looked into trying to help Indian veterans, through the Veteran's Administration, to get the training paid for?

Mr. SHANLEY. We do have a few Indian veterans that come to school, and they are eligible for VA benefits, as an individual. If they chose truck driving, they can receive that money for taking truck driving courses.

The actual number of veterans now, though, has dropped off, over the last several years. The last rush we had was during Desert Storm.

Senator CAMPBELL. Yes.

Mr. SHANLEY. We are having a few that are tricking back now, but we are not getting a large number of veterans that are attending our institution.

Senator CAMPBELL. Well, you mentioned the difficulty of the expense and a little bit about the complexity of driving the big rigs.

But there are different levels of commercial driver's licenses. If you have one truck, then for instance, you get endorsements when you drive, for the basic driver skills, and you get one for air brakes. You get one for HAZMATs. You get one for doubles and triples. You get one for tankers. You get all these different endorsements, as you take the tests.

So the training you do is just basically for the basic level of CDL. Is that correct?

Mr. SHANLEY. It is the basic level, and then we work with the tribal programs in providing the hours necessary for some heavy equipment, some pieces of heavy equipment.

Then we also have a hazardous materials program at the college, that works with them on the hazardous materials portion of the CDL.

Senator CAMPBELL. When they get that, normally, people that learn to drive, they have to take a State written test. But the driver test, itself, is usually done by the driving school; or the State can do it, in most States.

Do you do the testing at the school, or do you send them to the State?

Mr. SHANLEY. The State does the testing.

Senator CAMPBELL. It is the State.

Have you worked at all with any other schools; or maybe a better question would be, when you graduate somebody, do you have any access to some of the hiring agencies?

For instance, at many of the big truck shows, like Mid-America, Louisville, there are literally dozens of recruitment booths, Warner, Swift, these big outfits. They have booths there, where they are openly trying to recruit students.

In fact, I understand, in some cases, if you, as a young person that wants to go to driver training, you can sign a contract with some of these big companies; where you sign a contract saying that you will go to work for them after you graduate, and they, in fact, will pay for your training. That is done with a number of big companies, because they need drivers so badly.

Has your college tried to work with any of these big trucking firms, to see if they would pay for some of the training, on the condition that the graduate goes to work for them.

Mr. SHANLEY. No, Senator; we have not, to this point. Primarily, it is because we have not had that large a critical mass of students that we have graduated. Most of the people that we do have that graduate, are absorbed almost immediately right into our local economy.

Particularly on a seasonal basis, we need truck drivers for the Bureau of Indian Affairs Roads Program. There is always ongoing highway construction. As you know, Montana has some pretty poor roads, and they are working on them constantly.

Senator CAMPBELL. Yes.

Mr. SHANLEY. So our people, you know, they tend to get absorbed almost immediately.

Senator CAMPBELL. So you do not really need a placement service for them; but usually, if they get the training, they can find something locally.

Mr. SHANLEY. If they go to the State Employment Service, they are hired almost immediately. Usually, though, it is in construction-related types of activities, as opposed to cross country driving.

Senator CAMPBELL. Yes; well, that just reinforces how badly drivers are needed, frankly.

You also mentioned job-seeking skills. If they are literally ready to be hired when they get out, if the market is such that they need drivers that bad, and the minute you graduate somebody, they have kind of got a job, what is the big importance of a job-seeking skill?

Mr. SHANLEY. Well, I think I might have misstated that a little bit, in the sense that it is probably more job-readiness skills. Our people need to be able to get up on time and make it to work; and they need to make it to work, day after day after day.

Senator CAMPBELL. It is called work ethic, I think.

Mr. SHANLEY. Right, yes, and we have as much of a problem with the work ethnic-related stuff, or probably more of a problem with that than we do with the skill level types of things.

Senator CAMPBELL. You also mentioned the demand for drivers, that perhaps ought to be expanded to include other vehicles. I am thinking in terms of some Indian drivers that I know, that drive school buses. Where do they normally take their training for the school buses?

Mr. SHANLEY. Well, again, it is the basic CDL license, and they could take that training through us or they can, you know try to do it on their own.

Senator CAMPBELL. Okay, but they have to get the bus endorsement.

Mr. SHANLEY. Right.

Senator CAMPBELL. That usually means they have to do some training in a bus.

Mr. SHANLEY. Well, we can provide that training for them. We have buses available through our tribal transportation system, that we can use for that purpose, if we have somebody that wants to get a bus certification.

But those jobs are local jobs that are available in almost every community. There is always a continual need for those people, as well.

Senator CAMPBELL. How long is the training that you put a student through?

Mr. SHANLEY. I think it is 1 year long for the certificate. But people can move through it faster, depending on their ability to take the CDL; and then they have so many hours for each of the different types of endorsements. I do not know those, offhand.

Senator CAMPBELL. It seems to me, most schools, if you go 5 days a week, on a full-time basis, 8 hour days, I think for all the endorsements, for all the training and everything, it is 30 days or less.

I think the U.S. Truck Driving School, it is called, they have facilities all over the country. I think theirs is 30 days or less, if you do it full-time.

But obviously, if a student is coming to you, sometimes he is already working somewhere else, part-time, to keep his family in food, while he is doing the training. So I can understand why it would take a little bit longer.

Have you sought out any private grants; for instance, perhaps from Packard that owns Peterbilt and Kenworth or Freightline, or some of these great big outfits? I mean, they are into making trucks, but if there is nobody to drive them, they are not going to sell as many trucks. I would think that they might be interested.

Mr. SHANLEY. No; not from the trucking industry. It is not because we would not. We just have not really known how to go about doing that.

We have had vocational education grants and other types of grants, that have provided some resources to our program; but again, those have been limited. We have also got, like JTPA money through the tribes; the Job Training Partnership Act.

Senator CAMPBELL. Oh, yes.

Mr. SHANLEY. And we have access to other types of employment; things like AVT, that runs through the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Senator CAMPBELL. You mentioned that you have one truck that you do most of the training in?

Mr. SHANLEY. Yes.

Senator CAMPBELL. What is it; what kind of a truck?

Mr. SHANLEY. I really could not tell you.

Senator CAMPBELL. Is it like a dump truck or an 18 wheeler?

Mr. SHANLEY. Oh, it is a semi, a tractor trailer; and then we have access to a variety of other equipment. We have a Belly Dump and a lowboy, that the tribe has, that we can use.

Senator CAMPBELL. I see, okay.

Mr. Fluke, just looking at all these notes that I scribble while people are talking, I have got to ask you this first one. What is that one thing that trucks do not haul? I saw Ms. Rush also get a surprised look on her face. [Laughter.]

I threw that in, because I knew that I would get the question.

Senator CAMPBELL. You just wanted to see if I was listening.

Mr. FLUKE. There is only one thing that I know of, personally, that trucks do not deliver.

Senator CAMPBELL. Can you say it for the record?

Mr. FLUKE. That is babies.

Senator CAMPBELL. Oh, yes. [Laughter.]

Mr. FLUKE. However, truck drivers have delivered a number of those, also.

Senator CAMPBELL. Yes; and I am sure that their families or their wives have them, or their husbands are in the process, too, there.

Why did you take up driving, and in your experience, do you know of many Native Americans that are driving?

Mr. FLUKE. I left a promising career at Safeway Stores. I was an assistant manager in the stores. I decided that I wanted to go into business for myself and make my million. Obviously, I did not quite make it. I did gain a million worth of experience, though.

Senator CAMPBELL. I know people in the trucking industry that say if you want to be a millionaire, you start with $2 million and go to $1 million.

Mr. FLUKE. $2 million and go to $1 million; that is correct.

I know of several Native Americans that I have encountered through my driving career in 18 years. I can honestly say that each and every one that I have met have been very safety-minded individuals.

They have been very conscientious, not only about their job; but more importantly, about the equipment that they drive. They realize that if it is broken, they are not going to make any money. That is not to say that people are not that way.

Senator CAMPBELL. Those few Indian drivers that you met, did they own their own?

Mr. FLUKE. I have met some owner-operators, and I have met, at Fed Ex Freight, where I am currently working, there are a number of us that are just kind of inter-mixed in with the masses, so to speak.

Senator CAMPBELL. You mentioned that it becoming more complex each year; and Dr. Stanley talked a little bit about the truck they have, that does not have power steering, which limits the ability for women to drive them, sometimes, because it requires some strength.

What are some of the things that have made it more complex?

Mr. FLUKE. In my 18 years, I have gone from something that had a seat that bordered on a wooden box, to something that is creature-comfort, that you would find in a Cadillac, or anything that you see.

Senator CAMPBELL. Air condition, power, and all that.

Mr. FLUKE. Exactly; anything that you see on your automobile that you drive, you pretty much can find that and more in a commercial truck today.

We have GPS systems. We have satellite tracking. They have come out with ABS brakes, not only on tractors, but trailers. There are sensors for not only axle temperatures, but for weight, like, the logging industry. It is phenomenal. The trucks are no longer just mechanically controlled. They are computer controlled.

Senator CAMPBELL. Yes; and they are expensive.

Do you know of any efforts that the ATA has made to attract Native Americans; or do they have any programs to attract any minorities, for that matter?

Mr. FLUKE. ATA represents the trucking companies. They have guidelines for training entry-level drivers; not selection guidelines. They have, through PDTI and the Alliance, guidelines that they provide to schools. The schools, in turn, put out a quality driver.

As far as specific targets of minorities, at this point, Senator, I believe that as long as he is a safe, well-trained driver, the ATA would welcome anyone on the Nation's highways.

Senator CAMPBELL. Many Indian reservations are in pretty distant areas from major metropolitan areas, as you probably know.

How important is location to the trucking industry, when you are recruiting new drivers? I know a lot trucking companies, they put you through more training, even after you go to work.

Mr. FLUKE. Correct; I am familiar with D–Q University there in the Sacramento Valley and their location. They are located between I–505, which connects I–5 and Interstate 80.

I am sure that the graduates that graduate from there are placed in a company that will get them home regularly, because they are on a much well-traveled truck route.

In Doctor Shanley's case, I am not real familiar with the northwestern part of Montana. But I am assuming that they seem to be a little more remote than D–Q University. Their students, if they want to go into the industry, as opposed to working on tribal projects, may have to relocate.

But it seems to me that anyone that has graduated from a truck-driving school, their main goal in life is to drive a truck. So you go where the opportunity is.

With Fed Ex Freight, for instance, we are hiring qualified drivers at this moment, in areas in the northwest and in the southwest, in the Arizona area and in the L.A. Basin. But unfortunately, we require some experience.

Entry level companies like the one you suggested, Werner and Swift, will train a driver, and help them acclimate to the changes in lifestyle.

Becoming a professional truck driver is not just going down and passing the CDL and climbing in the seat, and off you go. There is a change in a person's lifestyle. You are gone several days at a time.

It behooves the trainer that is training these people to also recognize this fact, and to train, if you will, the spouse that is left behind at home.

But the career, there are endless opportunities in this career. I see it, for the Native American people, there is a positive to this. They can expand their way of life, their lifestyle.

I look at this program, two years from now, when this bill is passed, we are going to be back here, seated at this table, asking you for more money, because we have had such a dramatic turnout from Native American people.

Not only when these people are successful, are they going to be successful for their own reasons and their own people; but they are going to be successful for this country. What is more, they are going to be a positive image, a role model, if you will, for the people that are coming up, generations to come.

Senator CAMPBELL. I like that response. Indian people generally like to travel, too, and they like to see new things. The advantage of that is that they bring home new ideas, too.

Mr. FLUKE. Where else can you go on vacation and get paid for it?

Senator CAMPBELL. Yes; I have had people tell me that.

Ms. Rush, I thought it was really interesting that you are a woman owner of a business that historically there tends to be more men involved than women, and a Native American woman, at that, and successful. I am sure it has not been easy, doing that.

Ms. RUSH. No.

Senator CAMPBELL. What suggestions would you make to help encourage Native Americans to go into the trucking industry?

Ms. RUSH. Well, I would suggest that if you can expose the you to the truck shows, like the one in Kentucky that you mentioned; and what we do, with our drivers, we let them bring their 13, 14, 15 year old children, to ride with them to get the experience.

So I think it is having exposure and on-hand, and seeing the brand new trucks, and really marketing to the colleges. Where our business is focused, I tend to be more towards the Canadian reservations.

Senator CAMPBELL. Yes; your business primarily hauls automobiles, did you say?

Ms. RUSH. Auto parts to assemble all the automobiles.

Senator CAMPBELL. Auto parts, okay.

Ms. RUSH. So we are in the I–75 Corridor and Central States.

Senator CAMPBELL. Are there any other Native Americans in your firm, that are drivers?

Ms. RUSH. Yes; well, my vice president of operations is Native American. That is my sister. My father helped me when we started out, in terms of, he got the maintenance jobs.

Senator CAMPBELL. This is off the subject a little bit, but how did you happen to get involved in trucking heavy trucks?

Ms. RUSH. I tell most people, because I could not sing or dance.

Senator CAMPBELL. I cannot either. That is why they elected me. [Laughter.]

Ms. RUSH. Well, I am thinking of taking lessons.

But actually, I had a summer internship with an air freight company.

Senator CAMPBELL. Do you drive?

Ms. RUSH. I do not drive anymore. I go forward well, but my backing up is poor. I started off with small 18- footers and 24-footers. I started with three trucks, and would get the call at 3 a.m.; you are our last hope. [Laughter.]

But truthfully, the trucking industry, when I was going to college, was the industry of the 2000's. It was the fastest growing industry. It was not what you made. It was how you got the product to the consumer that was going to be the challenge.

I thought it was pioneering. So that intrigued me. Probably at the age I started, I thought I could retire, you know, by 26. So I had a lot of ambition.

But it is very appealing to several races and several people of America, because you do have the freedom. You get an assignment and the you do have the freedom. But you do have to have the work skills.

Senator CAMPBELL. Yes; I note that there is a larger percentage of women drivers now than there used to be, years ago. In fact, visiting a couple of truck driving schools, I was really amazed at the number of women that are enrolled; and some of them are doing very well. Some that are driving with their husbands, between the two of them, they are making $100,000 a year, or more.

Ms. RUSH. Yes.

Senator CAMPBELL. I mean, I think it is just terrific, you know. Of course, they get equal pay. That speedometer does not know if you are a man or a woman behind the wheel. I mean, you get equal pay.

Do you know of any Native American women drivers, at all? I heard of two. In fact, I did not just hear about them. There was a magazine, Landline, I think it was, a trucker magazine, that did a little story about two Native American women that were driving somewhere out West.

Ms. RUSH. I am not familiar with them.

Senator CAMPBELL. You are not?

Ms. RUSH. No.

Senator CAMPBELL. Does your firm, or the NABA, engage tribes or tribal colleges in recruiting?

Ms. RUSH. Recruiting has been our biggest challenge, because we have had a lot of hyper-growth within our industry. Then when 9–11 hit, it was just a phenomenal experience to survive through all the changes you had to respond to. So I am proud of our team for doing that.

It has always been a vision to set up a recruiting network on tribes. One of the challenges, as mentioned today is, you need experience. We have such a critical shortage, and a lot of opportunity, that my insurance, the rates have gone up 100 percent in our industry. For us, that is just millions of dollars. So one of the clauses is, they have to have 2 years experience.

So I have the vision to network on tribes, and leverage driving schools that already exist, and sponsor Native people that are interested, but we have not had the process fully formed.

Senator CAMPBELL. When the driver comes to you, and they have gotten out of a driving school somewhere and you hire them, do you have your own training program, too, for your company, that they have to go through?

Ms. RUSH. Yes; ours is not as formalized as perhaps a Fed Ex or Warner or Swift. But what we typically do, because the Rush group has five separate companies under it, and one is a local city, we will team them with a driver for 2 to 4 weeks in the city, to get stop and go, and more processes of backing up. Then we will team them for a shorter haul and then long haul.

Our company has a uniqueness to appeal to the driver that wants to be home every night; to the driver, every week; to once a month.

Senator CAMPBELL. So you have dedicated runs?

Ms. RUSH. Yes, yes, we do.

Senator CAMPBELL. Well, I thank you, and I thank everyone on this panel for testifying today. I am determined to try to move this bill. I think it is a good bill. I know that Senator Inouye, who had a conflict this morning and could not be here, will be very helpful with it, too.

What we are going to do is keep the record open. If you have any additional comments that you would like to submit, if you would write them down and send them in; or if anybody in the audience would like to submit some comments, too.

I look forward to trying to move this bill, this year. We only have really about 1½ months left, before we are adjourned for the year. But I think it has the seeds of a really good bill.

So I thank you for appearing, and the committee is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 10:56 a.m., the committee was adjourned, to reconvene at the call of the Chair.]

APPENDIX

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DAVID FLUKE, PROFESSIONAL DRIVER, FEDEX FREIGHT WEST

Chairman Inouye, Senator Campbell, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to express the trucking industry's perspectives regarding truck driving training issues and, more specifically, S. 1344, the "Native American Commercial Driver Training and Technical Assistance Act." I am David Fluke, a professional truck driver for FedEx Freight West based in California, a distinguished member of the American Trucking Association's America's Road Team, and a proud member of the Cherokee Nation. I have driven large trucks professionally in the United States for 18 years, and I am proud to communicate to you that I have logged over 1.8 million accident-free and citation-free miles behind the wheel in my driving career. Additionally, I have competed in four truck driving championship events and, in 2001, represented FedEx at the National Truck Driving Championships. I am also pleased to note that I have won numerous FedEx safety awards, including the prestigious President's Award.

I am appearing before the committee today on behalf of the American Trucking Associations, Inc. [ATA]. ATA is the national trade association of the trucking industry. ATA is a federation of affiliated State trucking associations, conferences, and other organizations that together include more than 35,000 motor-carrier members, representing every type and class of motor carrier in the Nation. ATA represents an industry that employs nearly 10 million people in our great country, providing 1 out of every 14 civilian jobs. This includes the more than 3 million professional truck drivers who travel over 400 billion miles per year to deliver to Americans 87 percent of their transported food, clothing, finished products, raw materials, and other items.[1]

ATA supports S. 1344 and commends Senator Campbell for its introduction.

Looking at the industry figures mentioned above, you can readily see that the old adage, "If you got it, a truck brought it," is truer now than it has ever been. While trucking may not be the most glamorous industry, it is definitely one of the most essential industries to the American economy. Every business and every person in this country relies on trucks to move America's goods safely and efficiently. Drivers, of course, are the key to delivering the freight on time, every time. In fact, the keys to a thriving trucking business are literally and figuratively in the hands of the company's professional drivers. And, while professional driving continues to become more complex, requiring more sophisticated skills and a higher tolerance of stress than ever before, I am pleased to report that truck drivers are delivering the goods more safely and more efficiently than ever before.

According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration [FMCSA], the safety trends in the trucking industry are clearly heading in the right direction. In their

[1] 87.3 percent by revenue. American Trucking Associations, *U.S. Freight Transportation Forecast to 2013*, 2002.

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most recent report entitled, "Large Truck Crash Facts 2000," FMCSA reports that over the last 20 years [1980 to 2000], the **fatal crash rate** for large trucks has **declined** from 4.6 fatal crashes per 100 million miles traveled to 2.2 fatal crashes per 100 million miles traveled, a **52-percent decrease.** FMCSA also reports that the large truck injury and property damage crash rates are also on the decline. From 1988 to 2000 [1988 was the first year in which FMCSA's predecessor agency began collecting and analyzing injury and property damage crash data], the large truck injury crash rate has declined from 67.9 injury crashes per 100 million miles to 46.8 injury crashes per 100 million miles, a **31-percent decline.** Similarly, the property damage only crash rate has declined between 1988 and 2000 from 210.7 crashes per 100 million miles to 163.7 crashes per 100 million miles, a **22-percent decline.** FMCSA also reports that alcohol involvement for large truck drivers involved in fatal crashes has declined **73 percent** since 1982, the first year that the U.S. Department of Transportation's Fatality Analysis Reporting System [FARS] included data for alcohol involvement in fatal crashes. It is for these and other reasons that professional drivers like myself are proud of our profession and the industry we work within.

ATA and its members have been involved in driver training issues since ATA's establishment in the 1930's. The reason for ATA's longstanding involvement is simple—well-trained drivers are safe drivers, and safe drivers save companies money. They are also more productive drivers, good caretakers of their equipment, and they are more adept at customer relations. Company investments in training and driver development result in improved safety performance and a reduction in personnel problems.

While ATA has been active in many driver training initiatives, two are of particular note. The first is ATA's support for the Professional Truck Driver Institute [PTDI]. Established in 1986, PTDI has become the Nation's foremost advocate of optimum standards and professionalism for entry-level truck driver training. The Institute is credited with developing the first voluntary curriculum and voluntary standards recognized by both the industry and government. PTDI also provides a forum through which the key stakeholders—insurers, training schools, and motor carriers are able to help assure that America's entry-level drivers have been properly trained and are competent to enter the industry. ATA supports the mission of PTDI, and has provided both financial and technical assistance to the Institute for many years. In fact, PTDI is managed by the Truckload Carriers Association, an ATA-affiliated organization.

Additionally, ATA was one of the founding members of the Driver Training and Development Alliance in 1994. In early 1990's, trucking industry association managers agreed that motor carriers were making progress in implementing and managing voluntary driver training and development programs, but that more could be done. In mid-1994, 14 trucking-related associations agreed to form the Driver Training and Development Alliance in order to gather, disseminate and promote successful voluntary driver training programs and activities. Throughout the 1990's, the Alliance sponsored annual forums for stakeholders to discuss and advance key training issues, it created a practical guide to identify commercial drivers at higher risk for accidents and violations and established effective countermeasures, and its members assisted in reviewing and improving PTDI's certification process for entry-level driver training programs. Through its involvement in these organizations, ATA has been a driving force in improving both entry-level and in-service driver training.

Unfortunately, the trucking industry has been plagued with a chronic shortage of qualified drivers. Although the shortage eased in 2001 as a result of the economic recession, the shortage is again becoming evident as the economy begins to move forward. David Goodson, Banner editor of the National Survey of Driver Wages, and now an industry consultant said recently "the demographics that created the driver shortage haven't changed. Not enough new young drivers are coming into the industry and the shortage appeared to be over in 2001 only because the recession cut the demand for trucking services so severely."[2]

ATA estimates that the trucking industry will need more than 80,000 new professional drivers each year for the foreseeable future. The industry will need approximately 35,000 qualified drivers because of industry growth and another 45,000–50,000 qualified drivers due to attrition, either from retirement or leaving the profession altogether.[3] Thus, programs and initiatives aimed at expanding the pool of potential drivers are welcomed.

Additionally, the changing demographics of this country have clearly changed the trucking industry's recruiting practices. In its early days, trucking drew young,

[2] Transport Topics, July 15, 2002.
[3] Empty Seats and Musical Chairs, The Gallup Organization, October 1997.

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white males who sought independence and wanted to use the open road to see the country. Minorities are growing dramatically as a percentage of the U.S. population and, as a result, the industry is actively recruiting more drivers from minority groups [that is, Hispanics, African-Americans, Native Americans, et cetera]. Also, the industry is now recruiting heavily in areas other than the large population centers. As an example, if there is a confluence of Interstate highways in a rural area, carriers will seek to employ people who live in that area because it is easier to get them home on a more regular basis.

ATA supports the efforts of Senator Campbell and the Committee on Indian Affairs to promote professional truck driver training programs at tribally controlled community colleges. If passed, S. 1344 holds the potential to provide a good career to many Native Americans interested in having an exciting career while moving America's economy. Professional truck driving is a career that more than 3 million Americans currently call their own. It is also a job that offers an opportunity to make a good wage—the average truck driver currently makes more than $40,000 annually. At the same time that this bill would provide opportunities for Native Americans, it will be assisting the trucking industry by expanding the pool of qualified driver candidates—an expansion that is sorely needed. S. 1344 offers the proverbial "win-win" scenario.

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, once again thank you for the opportunity to offer our thoughts on professional truck driver training issues and on S. 1344. We look forward to working with the committee in any way we can to put more well trained and qualified drivers on the road.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANDRA RUSH, PRESIDENT, RUSH TRUCKING

5 Mr. Chairman Inouye, and Mr. Vice Chairman, Senator Campbell, thank you very much for the opportunity to address this committee on the Native American Commercial Driving Training and Technical Assistance Act.

My name is Andra Rush. I am president of Rush Trucking, a $1-million long haul and expediting operation in Detroit Michigan serving the auto industry since——

I have been in the transportation industry for over 18 years and have seen the tremendous rise in demand for qualified drivers within this industry. We are faced with "an" ever increasing demand of inventory velocity "of" transportation via truck v. the rail mode of transportation of the past. The automotive industry has been a leader in minority supplier development and training. As a result, several strong small businesses have emerged creating numerous employment opportunities and further promotion of diversity based suppliers in North America.

The driver shortage has been a critical problem of in our industry since the early nineties. The statistics demonstrate the demand for a solid strong driver base to fill vacancies that exist now and for the future. The fact is, there are not enough qualified and trained drivers in the industry to support the demand. Competition in this industry has pressured small businesses to focus on survival and the limited financial resources have limited the ability to provide the training and technical assistance necessary to privately create and fund driving schools "so necessary" to supply the industry's needs.

As this committee well knows, economic self sufficiency for Native people remains an elusive goal. In spite of more than 175 years of Federal support and oversight, Native Americans rank last in every measurement of quality of life in the United States.

As president of NABA (Native American Business Alliance, an organization formed 7 years ago in partnership with GM, Ford, DCX, Honda, and Toyota and which has now grown to more than 50 Fortune 500 companies), I believe that America's First People can realize the American Dream and reclaim their proud heritage by identifying and capitalizing on gaps and niches in the American workforce.

I am confident that the Commercial Vehicle driving professional career will create a workforce that can be rapidly employed and contribute to the solution of the driver shortage facing our industry and allow the Native people to remain on tribal lands and find employment that provides a living wage, solid benefits and opportunity for advancement.

It is my goal that the US Senate approves and supports this legislation.

Thank you very much Mr. Chairman Inouye and Mr. Vice Chairman, Senator Campbell.

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF JAMES SHANLEY, PRESIDENT, AMERICAN INDIAN HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM, FORT PECK COMMUNITY COLLEGE, POPLAR, MT

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Vice Chairman, and distinguished members of the committee, thank you for inviting me to testify before your committee today. My name is Dr. James Shanley, and I am honored to be here in my capacity as president of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium [AIHEC] and as president of Fort Peck Community College, which is located on the Great Plains of the Fort Peck Indian reservation in northeast Montana.

In 1972, six tribally controlled colleges established the American Indian Higher Education Consortium—AIHEC to provide a support network for its member institutions. Today AIHEC represents 32 tribal colleges and universities in 12 States to specifically serve the higher education needs of American Indian students. Over the past 3 decades, tribal leaders have continued to recognize that only through local, culturally relevant, and holistic methods, can many American Indians succeed in higher education. Collectively, the tribal colleges currently serve approximately 30,000 full- and part-time students from over 250 federally recognized tribes. A majority of our member institutions offer 2-year degrees and vocational certificates, with eight colleges offering baccalaureate degrees, and two that offer Masters degree programs. Together, we are proud to say we represent the most significant and successful development in American Indian education history, promoting achievement among students who would otherwise never know educational success.

Tribal Colleges and Universities [TCUs] are deeply tied to the welfare of our respective communities. Our reservations are located in remote areas, and our populations are among the poorest in the Nation. On average, median household income levels are only about one-half of the level for the U.S. population as a whole. Conditions on the reservations make for stagnant economies. Postsecondary educational programs at tribal colleges, including vocational education, make it possible for our students to train for and obtain jobs that offer stability, benefits, and a decent salary, which in turn reduce welfare dependence and provide an economic boost to local communities. Most importantly, these programs, and the resulting boost in employment, aid in providing a sense of self-sufficiency that is critical in moving the American Indian people forward.

Tribal colleges serve multiple roles in our communities: Functioning as community centers, libraries, tribal archives, career and business center, economic development centers, and public meeting places. TCUs can also serve as a practical resource for upkeep of communal property. Programs such as the one proposed in S. 1344 that require the acquisition of equipment that can serve dual uses are a ready aid to tribal governments. When not in use by the college for training programs, this equipment can be utilized for reservation economic development projects, such as construction of student and community housing, paving of local roads, and hauling food supplies and building materials.

Mr. Chairman, despite their remarkable accompliahments, tribal colleges remain the most poorly funded institutions of higher education in the country. Funding for basic institutional operations for 24 reservation-based colleges is provided through the Tribally Controlled College or University Assistance Act of 1978. Funding under the act is authorized at $6,000 per full-time Indian student [ISC]. In fiscal year 2002, 21 years after funding for institutional operations was first appropriated under this act, the tribal colleges are receiving just $3,916 per ISC, less than two-thirds of the authorized level. While mainstream institutions enjoy a stable foundation of State and local support, TCU's rely on annual appropriations from the Federal Government for their institutional operating funds. Because we are located on Federal trust land, States bear no obligation to fund our colleges. In fact, most States do not even pay our colleges for the non-Indian State resident students who account for approximately 20 percent of TCU enrollments.

Vocational education programs and workforce training are time-honored methods for improving the livelihoods of those who seek quality job skills in less time than it takes for a more formal course of study. However, in the past, basic instruction in a trade, any trade, was considered sufficient to fulfill the Federal government's obligation to educate American Indians. Often, the vocational education programs for American Indians were limited to what the Federal Government offered through the G.I. Bill, regardless of their suitability to the needs of the students or the areas in which they lived.

TCU's now offer a wide range of vocational education specifically tailored to the Deeds of the students and their communities. Today, as this legislation recognizes, there is a tremendous need for commercial vehicle drivers and that need will only increase. This legislation would enable TCU's to expand even further the range of

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employment possibilities available to American Indian students and provide them with entry into this rapidly expanding and lucrative job market.

One of the reasons only a few of the tribal colleges offer programs in commercial vehicle operations is the prohibitive startup costs. The per-student cost estimates do not take into account the enormous expense of equipment acquisition and maintenance. A brand new tractor-trailer of the type frequently seen on our Nation's highways would cost about $150,000. Tribal colleges can obtain a sufficiently reliable used vehicle for about one-third that amount, but often the expense of frequent repairs and additional maintenance negate any temporary surplus in a program's budget. Furthermore, equipment must be brought up to legal standards of use once purchased, which can run as much as an additional $30,000.

There are also considerable costs involved in the day-to-day running of vocational education programs such as training commercial vehicle drivers. Salish Kootenai College, on the Flathead Reservation in Western Montana, currently spends $300,000 annually on its Highway Construction Worker program, approximately $12,500 per student, and this does not include equipment acquisition costs, Our certificate program in Truck Driving/Heavy Equipment at Fort Peck Community College has similar per student costs. Our colleges receive no State aid, and are currently funding these programs through a patchwork of Federal grants and when necessary, deductions from other already stretched operating budgets.

Another strain to already stretched resources is the expense of securing a sufficient number of certified instructors to meet the instructor-to-student ratio necessary to satisfy our strict accreditation standards. Programs like these that are based largely on hands-on experience make larger class sizes ineffective and unsafe. When class size; balloon, we must cut down on course offerings or risk going over our budget for faculty, and ultimately it is the students who pay the price.

Of course, students not only need to be instructed in the fundamentals of their chosen trade, but in basic job seeking and related skills as well. Today's Tribal Colleges and Universities address both of these needs in a way that not only satisfies our students financially, but psychologically as well. A clear example of this is the Highway Construction Worker program at Salish Kootenai College where students are required to complete a course in job seeking skills, which prepares them to be effective competitors for employment in their chosen field. Such a comprehensive approach is invaluable in taking these programs from the abstract into that which is truly a tool for empowerment.

We fully support this measure as providing positive assistance for our students to realize their full potential and offer great benefits to the economic health of our communities. Tribal colleges are deeply appreciative of any means through which they can increase and stabilize funding in operations and program areas.

Mr. Chairman, the proposed legislation does not mention specific language about the level of funding or the duration of the grants, only the number of grants available. As noted earlier, vocational education programs not only have tremendous startup costs but considerable day-to-day operational expenses as well. One concern we have is expending the significant costs involved for a college to start a training program that would only be funded for 1 or 2 years. Without adequate funding levels and enough time for each grant award, programs could be set up to fail.

The awarding of 3- to 5-year grants would solve this problem by providing stable funding to get a program up and running. In addition, we suggest that the legislation not limit to four the number of grants that may be awarded by the Secretary of Labor but, instead, specify an adequate amount of funding to support that number of grants. For example, $300,000 x 4 = $1.2 million per year for 5 years—in other words a $6-million program. If additional funding can be secured for this program, the Secretary would not be limited to four awards, thereby allowing more colleges the chance to offer this valuable program to their students.

We also believe that there could be additional employment opportunities if the proposed definition of "commercial vehicle driving" in section 3 of the legislation were expanded beyond, "driving of a vehicle which is a tractor-trailer truck," thereby giving the tribal colleges the flexibility to train students to do other truck and heavy equipment driving such as construction and logging trucks, water tankers and other vehicles requiring commercial licenses.

There are also a few technical changes that we would respectfully suggest be made to S. 1344 and I will ask that our AIHEC staff address those minor changes with the staff of the committee, with whom they have long enjoyed a very productive working relationship.

Mr. Chairman, in closing, I want to reiterate that the Tribal Colleges and Universities are committed to educating and training American Indian people and to moving more people from welfare to work. We are committed to revitalizing our communities and America's economy through education and training in areas of need, and

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we are committed to plowing any investment made by the Congress back into the education and training system in Indian Country. We appreciate this committee's long-standing support of tribal colleges, and we look forward to working with you to improving access to postsecondary educational and training opportunities for the betterment of American Indian students, and their communities.

James E. Shanley, Ed.D.

(Assiniboine) President, American Indian Higher Education Consortium Fort Peck Community College Poplar, Montana (406) 768–5551 Dr. James E. Shanley is president of the American Indian Higher Education Consortium (AIHEC) which supports the work of the Nation's 32 Tribal Colleges and serves as their collective voice, advocating on behalf of the institutions of higher education that are defined and controlled by their respective tribal nations.

During Dr. Shanley's first term as AIHEC president in 1978, he provided substantial work and leadership in securing the passage of the Tribally Controlled Community College Act, Public Law 95–471.

A member of the Fort Peck Assiniboine Tribe in Poplar, Montana, Dr. Shanley is presently serving his 17th year as president of Fort Peck Community College, a tribally controlled community college, chartered by the government of the Fort Peck Assiniboine and Sioux Tribes.

Dr. Shanley's history is one of tremendous achievement and advocacy on behalf of American Indian education. He is continuously called upon by many national organizations for his recognized leadership. He served on the board of the American Council on Education and is a long-standing trustee for the American Indian College Fund. Dr. Shanley is a primary founder of the College Fund, an organization that secures private sector support for AIHEC's member Tribal Colleges and Universities.

On the State level, Dr. Shanley was treasurer of the Fort Peck Tribal Farm Board, Assiniboine and Sioux Construction Development director, and Assiniboine and Sioux Industries board director and treasurer. From 1975–80, he served as president of Standing Rock College—now, Sifting Bull College—in Fort Yates, North Dakota. During that time he was also active on the North Dakota Indian Education Association, Committee on the Humanities and Public Issues, and the Governor's Commission on Higher Education Facilities Planning.

Regionally, Dr. Shanley was director of the Southwest Resource and Evaluation Center in Tempe, Arizona and the North Dakota Johnson-O'Malley Program in Bismark, as well as the education manager of the United Tribes Education Technical Center.

A Vietnam War veteran, Dr. Shanley earned a Doctorate in Educational Administration from the University of North Dakota; Master of Arts in Education from Arizona State University; and, Bachelor of Science in Education from Eastern Montana College.

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